AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with strikethrough. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for the dispatch of ordered articles, in which different articles are ordered from a mail-order firm or one or more online suppliers (2), and the relevant order data and customer details, such as name, address, are saved in a database of a dispatch center of a common dispatch service, (4), characterized by the steps comprising:

- transferring or forwarding the order data from the customer (1) in question to the relevant manufacturers/suppliers (5) of the requested articles,

- notifying the dispatch center (3) of a common dispatch service of the earliest possible outward delivery time t_{OutM} for each of the manufacturers/suppliers (5), and saving this under the respective article no. number in the database (4) at the dispatch service,

- determining the latest of the earliest possible arrival times of the articles at the dispatch center t_{ArrD}, each arrival time being calculated by adding the respective transport time $t_{TransMD}$ to the earliest possible outward delivery time t_{OutM},

- the dispatch service notifying each manufacturer/supplier (5) for the order concerned of the outward delivery time to be achieved, which is obtained from the latest of the earliest possible arrival times at the dispatch center t_{ArrD} minus the respective transport time from the manufacturer/supplier (5) to the dispatch center (3),

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- the manufacturers/suppliers (5) sending out the ordered articles to the dispatch center (3) at the notified times, and the articles being forwarded jointly to the customer (1).

2.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized by the additional steps~~ further comprising:

- determining the earliest possible delivery time t_{DelC} to the customer (1) by adding the transport time between dispatch center (3) and customer (1) $t_{TransDC}$ onto the latest arrival time t_{ArrD}, and then adding onto this a handling time at the dispatch service,

- the dispatch service notifying the customer (1) of at least one proposal $Pt_{DelC} \geq t_{DelC}$ for the delivery time, for confirmation,

- the customer (1) notifying the dispatch service of the confirmed delivery time C_{tDelc},

- postponing the outward delivery times to be achieved by the manufacturers/suppliers (5) on the basis of the earliest possible delivery time to the customer (1), by the time difference between the confirmed and the earliest possible delivery time.

3.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the dispatch service is notified of the transport times $t_{TransMD}$ between the manufacturers/suppliers (5) and the dispatch center (3), together with the earliest possible outward delivery times t_{OutM}, and the information saved in the database (4).

4.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein in order to determine the current transport times $t_{TransMD}$ between manufacturer/supplier (5) and dispatch center (3), these times are calculated, saved and statistically analyzed on a continuous basis.

5.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a single online supplier (2), which co-ordinates the dispatch, leads to several sub-online suppliers (5).

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6.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the earliest outward delivery times of the articles from the manufacturers/suppliers (5) are compared with each other, and where a set time difference between the earliest outward delivery times is exceeded the articles are not sent jointly to the customer (1).

7.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the size of the articles and their characteristics are also saved in the database (4), if required this information is checked in order to ascertain whether these articles can be sent in one parcel, and they are dispatched in one parcel if a positive result is obtained from the check.

8.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein where there are several possible manufacturers/suppliers (5) for a specific article a selection is made on the basis of the shortest possible transport distances to the customer and/or the earliest possible outward delivery times.

9.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the customer (1) selects the dispatch service.

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